

something bright by nocountryy

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Angst, Emotional Hurt/Comfort, F/M, Implied Sexual Content, Lake House AU, Season 2 spoilers, i just finished season 2 and i am emotional, jk more hurt than comfort, steve just..... needs love ok

Language: English

Characters: Jonathan Byers, Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington

Relationships: (Kind of) - Relationship, Jonathan Byers/Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington/Nancy Wheeler

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-10-31

Updated: 2017-10-31

Packaged: 2022-04-02 01:49:30

Rating: Teen And Up Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 980

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

things that help him sleep at night

something bright

Author's Note:

“there was this thing not long ago,
people were talking about the world ending on the
24th.
we laughed and thought what was the big deal,
when the world had ended again and again
and no one blinked an eye.
i think that is the most human thing we do.
we fear what is coming and forget when it is over.
i had hoped this when it comes to you.
that the fear would be short and the forgetting fast.
i had hoped and hoped and remembered still.”
--nurul ak

So he does this thing, sometimes, and it's kind of embarrassing.

“Kind of” might be an understatement. But nobody he knows can get into his head and figure it out so he guesses he can keep doing it. As long as he knows it's all make-believe and it can never actually happen, like when he was a kid and would pretend to slay dragons. All make believe, all just for fun.

When it's hard to sleep he imagines there is a body beside him to hold.

And she has a bird-like frame.

Porcelain skin.

A nose that looks like it's straight out of a Disney cartoon.

And... and she sleeps in this particular way.

(For this, he uses memories from last summer, when he brought her to his parent's lake house for a weekend. And all three nights they dragged the mattress out to the porch and it was almost like they were sleeping on the bank of the lake itself. She would squirm away from him at every *Friday the 13th* reference made and scold him about not being funny while smiling. Then he would wrap her in his arms. And her bare chest pressed against his was all the stars burning in the sky at once. And he would kiss her, there, cocooned in his childhood duvet as the moon sang across the water of the lake just a few steps away.)

She sleeps in this particular way. Like she's trying to prevent you from leaving the bed because she likes the weight of you too much. So he imagines a pointy little chin digging into the dip of his collarbone. And the charm necklace that was always warm with her body heat making an indent on his chest that he would only find out about the next morning and she would laugh with an insincere "oops."

And sometimes, just sometimes, he imagines he has a different name. A little brother. A lonely heart. And he imagines that maybe she isn't in his bed but she is just a phone call away, and he could still hold her hand. He imagines he has a different name and different history—he can't fathom what it is, really, that sets them apart but he knows it's *there* and it makes him upset and frustrated and... and some other emotion he doesn't have the energy to place.

But goddamn—if that motherfucker isn't the luckiest man alive.

There's this one memory he saves for when it's 3am and he can't stop his brain from running 90 mph down a highway with the headlights turned off. It's from the lake house, again, but it's their last night. And they had lit a fire in the living room and left the front door open the hopes that maybe some of the heat would crawl outside to them. Here, where there is no such thing as a nightmare and sleep comes as easy as the lapping of water against sand.

And this memory begins with him pulling his hand through her hair, blissful without the knowledge of all that is ahead of them, naive with the thought that what is ahead is small enough that they will be able to get through it.

For some reason, this night is different than the last. The finality of having to pack their bags the next morning and head back home makes the air crisper and the sky more beautiful. A siren's song begging them *please don't go. Not yet.* And the lake is louder, and her presence next to him is soft and sleepy as she traces slow circles into his chest with the back of her nails. His eyelids are heavy, just about to close when—

"Did you hear that?" She has bolted upright, pressing a forearm into the pillow they are sharing to hold her body up. Her jaw has that determined set to it, after a second of listening between the two of them she pushes up and sits back on her calves.

"I think it was just a moth hitting the screen."

“Shh.” She’s clambering to her feet, pulling down a cashmere cardigan from the chair they had thrown their clothes on and wrapping it around her naked frame. Barefoot, she pads to the porch door and eases it open. The moonlight catches her face and her eyes are wide and filled with awe and her lips are parted in a way that makes him think he has never loved a person more than he has in this moment. She stops on the second step, and presses a hand to her mouth. It looks like she is about to cry. “Oh, Steve.” It’s barely a whisper. He never pulled on a pair of pants so fast. He eases the door open like she did, because he can already see what she can through the screen that protects them from the outside world.

By the lake is a stag, his horns stretching behind him like a thorny veil. Silhouetted in the moonlight, he moves with a dreamlike quality, as if his hooves never quite touch the earth with each step.

And right as he stands center in the path leading to front of the house, he turns his massive head to the water. To the reflection of that brilliant moon, to the spray of brilliant stars that dance over the waves. His antlers cut fractured black lines into the lake filled with light, one massive leg poised in the air as if he was waiting for something. Anything.

To this, Steve wraps his arms around Nancy’s waist, and she places a delicate hand over his own and leans into his chest. He places a kiss at the crown of her head and holds her as tightly as he can.

And yes, this world is one worth saving for something like this.